

## **Testimony in Support of HB 1**

**Ohio House of Representatives  
House Finance Subcommittee on Primary & Secondary Education  
Representative Tracy Richardson, Chair  
February 24, 2021**

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Lakota Local School District**

Chair Richardson, Ranking Member Troy and members of the House Finance Subcommittee on Primary & Secondary Education, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today regarding HB 1, specifically regarding special education, gifted and English language learners. My name is Jenni Logan and I am the Treasurer/CFO of the Lakota Local School District in Butler County and for the past three (3) plus years I have served as a co-chair for one of the subgroups of the Cupp-Patterson workgroup. I consider it an honor to serve as a member of a workgroup charged with finding solutions to our broken school funding formula. And, I am very excited to review with you the items included in the fair school funding plan for our special education, gifted and English language learners.

I do want to start with a thank you. Several pieces of our original fair school funding plan were authorized by SB 310. These include funding and authorizing cost studies for special education and English language learners, establishing an incentive programs for gifted education in rural school districts and establishing a workgroup to study and recommend financial reporting improvements to more clearly establish our true investment in gifted education. We are grateful to our legislators for listening and responding to these recommendations.

Now, on to the remaining items included in HB1. Let's start with special education, which accounts for approximately 14-15% of the students we serve state-wide.

### Special Education

Our current funding model is a per pupil dollar amount for six categories of disabilities. These categories range from speech only (category 1) which is funded @ \$1,578, to deaf-blind, autism, and traumatic brain injury (category 6), which is funded @ \$25,637. Prior to 2014 these six categories were funded based on a multiplier of the base cost instead of a stand-alone dollar amount which exists today. Since that time, we have seen changes in funding for our special education students which has not been consistent with our base aide amount. For example, during the 2016-17 biennium special education increases were at 2% while the base cost increased by 1.7%. And, conversely, the 2018-19 biennium showed an increase in the base cost while the special education funding remained flat. To remove possible parity issues and to be fair, we support returning to a multiplier of the base for the six categories of special education students.

## Special Education Funding FY19

Disability Category	Disability Description	ADM (# of students)	% of Total Special Ed ADM	Per Pupil Funded Amount	Equiv Weight (multiplier of base)	State Special Ed Funding
1	<i>Speech only</i>	26,179.21	11.0%	\$ 1,578.00	0.2621	\$ 21,185,072.49
2	<i>LD, DH, Other Health minor</i>	156,623.48	65.8%	\$ 4,005.00	0.6653	\$ 329,450,983.70
3	<i>Hearing, SBH</i>	16,763.39	7.0%	\$ 9,622.00	1.5983	\$ 88,887,182.66
4	<i>Vision, Other Health Major</i>	1,295.45	0.5%	\$ 12,841.00	2.1331	\$ 8,836,039.22
5	<i>Orthopedic, Multiple Disability</i>	11,833.42	5.0%	\$ 17,390.00	2.8887	\$ 108,189,180.65
6	<i>Deaf-blind, TBI, Autism</i>	25,211.42	10.6%	\$ 25,637.00	4.2586	\$ 324,282,366.00
		237,906.37				\$ 880,830,824.72

*Source: ODE SFPR Summary Worksheet Report, FY19 Final #2 Payment*

You have heard from our poverty and preschool subgroup regarding access to a high-quality preschool for every economically disadvantaged four (4) year old. Currently, our special education preschool students are funded at half-time even though some students are receiving instruction less than or in excess of this. We support funding special education preschool students based on their percent of time being instructed just as we do with all other K-12 students.

Lastly but not least important, we support the full funding of special education students. Students have been funded at ninety percent (90%) since FY 2004. We recommend the additional ten percent (10%) be set-a-side for catastrophic costs. Currently, if the cost for a student in categories 2-5 (speech only is not eligible) exceeds a threshold amount of \$27,375 or if a category 6 student (i.e. autism) exceeds \$32,850 a district can file to receive additional monies for these more significant student needs. The current amount available state-wide is approximately \$45 million. Claims for last years catastrophic expenses exceeded \$166 million. That's a coverage of 27%. The additional 10% being set-a-side would more than double the amount available currently for reimbursement of district's catastrophic claims.

### Gifted

The next add-on I would like to address is gifted funding. The 2018-19 operating budget included a charge to the Ohio Department of Education to complete a cost study for Gifted Education. The Ohio Education Research Center completed this Gifted Cost Study on behalf of the Ohio Department of Education in May 2018. The goal of the study was twofold: a) develop a deeper understanding of the cost of providing Gifted Education services in a manner that is compliant with the state's Gifted Education operating standards; and b) identify the most appropriate method of funding Gifted Education. Currently, districts are funded for Gifted identification and the coordination of Gifted services. The Gifted Cost Study found this to be an underrepresentation of what it actually cost to provide gifted education that meets Ohio's Gifted operating standards. Our current funding method fails to take into consideration all the cost drivers for Gifted Education. The slide below represents the

seven (7) Gifted Education cost drivers that were identified and quantified from the Gifted Cost Study. The fair school funding model includes the funding of these categories at the stated per pupil amounts.

Category	Student Grade Level	Funding per student	Student count basis	Description
Identification/Testing:	K-6	\$ 24.00	# enrolled	One whole grade screening K-2 & one whole-grade screening in 3-6
Identification/Referrals	K-12	\$ 2.50	# enrolled	Requested by parents after whole-grade screenings
Professional Development	K-12	\$ 28.00	# identified w/10% minimum	60 hrs of PD for general ed teachers providing gifted services (2 yr period)
Gifted Coordinators	K-12	\$ 29.00	# enrolled	One for each 3,300 students, minimum .5, max 8 - avg salary & fringe \$85,776
Instructional Services	K-8	\$ 638.00 *	# identified	140 pupils per GIS, avg salary & fringe \$89,378
Instructional Services	9-12	\$ 578.00	# identified	140 pupils per HS teacher, avg salary & fringe \$80,974

\* Funding per student = \$641 with .2 minimum applied

### English Language Learners

The third and final category is English Language Learners. In Lakota we serve over 900 students representing over fifty (50) languages. These students often have the task of translating for their parents and other relatives in the home. As you can imagine, this poses challenges for these students as they work hard to navigate through our educational system. Currently, ELL funding is segmented into three categories and is based on the amount of time the student has been enrolled in schools in the United States. Total state funding for these students was approximately \$36 million in 2019. Over the past 10 years this population has doubled in size to nearly 60,000 students. The chart below shows a description of each of the categories.

### **English Language Learners Funding FY19**

Category	Description	ADM (# of students)	% of Total ELL ADM	Per Pupil Funded Amount	Equip Weight (multiplier of base)
1	students in U.S. schools for no more than 180 school days and not previously exempted from spring English assessments	10,826.94	19.3%	\$ 1,515	0.2517
2	students in U.S. schools more than 180 school days or previously exempted from spring English assessments	41,631.09	74.2%	\$ 1,136	0.1887
3	students in a Trial-Mainstream period	3,680.92	6.6%	\$ 758	0.1259
		56,138.95			

Source: ODE SFPR Summary Worksheet Report, FY19 Final #2 Payment

We support returning to a multiplier of the base cost for the three categories of ELL. As mentioned earlier regarding special education funding, in fiscal year 2014, the weighted funding for English Language Learners was converted to per pupil amounts. To avoid parity issues, the weighted funding for English Language Learners should be a multiplier of the base cost.

Additionally, recent changes at the federal level under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires district tracking of ELL students two (2) years after exiting ELL status. We support adjusting Category 3 funding to satisfy this mandate. Specifically, we ask that Category 3 funding be revised to include ELL students for the two (2) years after they have achieved proficiency. Achieving proficiency means no longer receiving services as an ELL student. Also, we support revising Category 2 funding to include all students enrolled more than 180 days until they achieve proficiency.

In closing, we ask our legislators and all Ohioans to consider our plan in its entirety, as an essential roadmap to guide school funding decisions. Together, we strive to ensure that Ohio's children will have the quality educational opportunities they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. And together, we can adopt a comprehensive, fair school funding plan that meets the needs of Ohio's children, future workforce, and economy.

At this time, I would like to thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.